

THE STUDY OF MAN

HOW MANY JEWS IN AMERICA?

Why We Don't Know

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CLOSER to the art of divination than to science is the study of the American Jewish population today. The truth is that—popular belief notwithstanding—we have no reliable knowledge of such elementary facts as how many Jews are born in America in a year, how many die, what their age distribution is, how many go to school. Indeed, we are perhaps most in the dark about that most elementary of all questions: how many Jews are there? True enough, persons who consider themselves well informed will say with little hesitation that there are about five million Jews in the United States—and that their number is increasing. Yet this good, round, concrete figure is based on a shaky structure of guesswork, ranging from the ingenious to the simple.

The crucial fact about the study of American Jewish population is that the United States Census, the statistical basis for a vast amount of sociological study and speculation about all sorts of questions, includes no questions on religious affiliation. There is no official count of Catholics, Protestants, and Jews in the United

States, as there is in Canada, most European countries, Palestine, and elsewhere. Without this basic count, and the supplementary information on births and deaths, on immigration and emigration, and on age distribution, it is impossible to state with definiteness how many Jews there are in the United States, and whether their number is increasing or decreasing.

During the first fifty years of the history of the republic there was little interest in the census except as a count of the population. In the last fifty years, the development of the Hollerith machine, and the replacing of hand by mechanical tabulation, enormously increased the possibilities of using the data as a tool for understanding and a guide to social planning. But by that time there were a number of Jewish organizations that felt distinctly uncomfortable over the prospect of an official count of Jews, and preferred not to press the matter. In fact, only recently the pressure of certain Jewish organizations led to the abandonment of the last official count of Jews maintained by the governments—the listing of immigrants by “race,” among them “Hebrew.” It is perfectly obvious why Jewish organizations should protest against what amounted to official recognition of the “Hebrews” as a “race.” On the other hand, the last candle was blown out and we are left completely in the statistical dark.

Today, organizations responsible for spending millions of dollars for services to the Jewish community have no good population data to use in planning their services, for today or the future. The Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds finds it needs population data in some detail to advise local communities correctly. The Jewish Welfare Board, responsible

THAT there are substantial numbers of Jews in America seems to be an established fact; yet just how many there are, is a subject about which the experts fall out among themselves. Here SOPHIA M. ROBISON recounts the various (and often bizarrely indirect) attempts to measure accurately America's Jewish population—and offers some figures of her own. Mrs. Robison is associate professor of social work at the New York School of Social Work. She has edited a volume, *Jewish Population Studies* (1943), and is the author of several other books on social problems. She received her AB from Wellesley College in 1909, and her MA and PhD from Columbia University.

for setting up and helping plan the programs of Jewish community centers, would like to know the distribution of Jewish young people and children. The American Association for Jewish Education would like to know the distribution by neighborhoods of Jewish children of school age. The United Service for New Americans, interested in placing immigrants in communities, would like to know what kinds of congregations, what proportions of Yiddish-speaking Jews, what kinds of occupational opportunities, are to be found in different communities.

Besides these practical organizational needs, there are also the demands of organizations interested primarily in research, in the expansion of our knowledge about Jews—the Conference on Jewish Relations, the Yiddish Scientific Institute (Yivo), and the research arms of the American Jewish Committee and the American Jewish Congress. The study of almost any Jewish sociological or psychological problem must either be based on population data, or needs population data as background.

LACKING the (apparently) solid foundation of the census, Jews have resorted to a variety of makeshifts to fill their needs. Let us look now at the data that these methods have made available, how it has been collected, and what may be learned from it.

The available data is summed up in tables in the *American Jewish Year Book*, published by the American Jewish Committee, which has for many years published estimates of the Jewish population by states. These figures have served as a kind of "official" estimate of the number of Jews. In the past, the estimates were those of the decennial Census of Religious Bodies.* In the current Volume 50, a new and much more detailed set of estimates is published by Ben B. Seligman and Harvey Swados, based on the answers of local communal authorities to a questionnaire by the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, supplemented by records kept by the Council, the United Jewish Appeal, and the Bureau of War Records of the Jewish Welfare Board.

In only some of these cities has there been some organized effort to count, or by some rigorous procedure estimate, the Jewish population (the methods that have been used will be described below); in those cases where there have been no surveys of any kind, there exist traditional estimates. (One respondent answers for a

community of twenty thousand Jews, "No one seems to know the origin of our estimate.") Seligman and Swados, pointing to the various sources of error that arise in a survey of the type they have conducted, comment that "national fund-raising organizations may have a tendency to overestimate population statistics; contrariwise, local fund raisers sometimes tend to underestimate their populations."

There are, however, studies of individual cities on more solid scientific footing. We have the volume of *Jewish Population Studies*, edited by the present writer in 1943, in which rather full data is given for ten cities. There are a number of PhD and other scholarly surveys: of New Orleans by Rabbi Julian B. Feibelman, of Jacksonville by William Boxerman. There are a number of WPA projects: Samuel Koenig's study of Stamford, and Mathews and McGill's study of the youth of New York City, in which a careful sample of youth of all denominations for the entire city of New York permits us to make a fairly good estimate of the Jewish population of New York in 1934.

IN COMMUNITIES with very few Jews it is possible to get a fairly good estimate of the population from some well-placed local informant. All the Jews in the locality are known, and with a relatively small error, they can all be enumerated. When the number of Jews in a town rises to one or two thousand, this kind of informal enumeration no longer achieves reliable results. It is particularly for the larger cities, in which the great bulk of Jews live,

* The Census of Religious Bodies was conducted every ten years, primarily to reveal the number of congregations and churches of each sect, capital investments, value of church property, and—for some denominations—the number of members and Sunday school registrants. Church membership, however, is a variable concept: Catholics include all infants baptized, many Protestant sects include only adult members. The Jewish agent of the census decided that he would get estimates of the total number of Jews in each city or town, on the theory that, in an ideological sense, all Jews are members of the congregation. The result was a set of estimates that gave neither synagogue membership nor the total population with any accuracy. In any case, the gross totals, without detail or breakdown, are almost useless for communal planning.

While Jewish demographers were trying to persuade the Jewish agent to improve his procedures, Congress cut the appropriations for the Bureau of the Census, leading to the elimination of the religious census planned for 1947.

that an armory of special techniques for estimating Jewish population has been developed by demographers. The estimates given by these various techniques become embodied in official statistics, and are used for all sorts of purposes, with little indication of the variability in the different procedures.

One device used to get detailed information on Jews is that of interpolation from census data for areas known to be Jewish. These areas are "known" to be Jewish as a matter of common knowledge (they may be, of course, 99, 75, or only 50 per cent Jewish—this prime fact is unknown). Once these areas are determined, it is assumed that the demographic detail for these areas applies to Jews of the community as a whole: the age breakdown, marital status breakdown, median rent, average years of schooling, found for the census tracts known to be Jewish, are considered true for the Jews of the entire community.

Sometimes we can do better in determining the Jewish areas. In 1920 in New York, for example, it was safe to assume that the "Russian-born" population of the census was predominantly Jewish. Accordingly assumptions about the Jewish population were based on the characteristics of the population of the areas in which the Russian-born were concentrated. Obviously, as the proportion of foreign born in the population declines, it becomes impossible to determine the Jewish areas in this way. For example, the new Jewish sections of Queens and Long Island do not have any sizable proportion of Russian-born.

The "death rate" method was used in estimating New York City's population in 1900, 1910, and 1925. If the Jewish births—or deaths—can be identified for a given city or town, it is then thought possible to apply a Census Bureau formula and get an estimate of local Jewish population. However, one has to make the assumption that Jewish and non-Jewish death rates are the same: and this is most likely not true. In the 1925 New York estimate made by this method, it was too enormous a task to determine all the Jewish dead of New York: a sample of sixteen census tracts out of approximately thirty-four hundred in the city was selected, and it was on the basis of this that the total estimate was built up.

ONE can introduce a number of refinements in this kind of work. A. A. Jaffe, who is responsible for the Chicago estimate (1930) of

265,000 Jews, used, instead of a general death rate to figure the Jewish population, the rate for the occupational and economic strata in which Jews are most heavily represented. It is hardly necessary to labor the drawbacks in these methods: one cannot be sure the dead are Jews, one cannot be sure what death rate is the right one to apply, one cannot be sure the areas one has selected as a sample form a good sample, or what part of the whole Jewish population they form, and the fact that one works with Jewish areas—whose characteristics are affected to an unknown extent by the non-Jews in them—introduces further unknown distortions. Then of course this method is only useful for giving an estimate of *total* population, and the necessary *details* for community planning must then be estimated some other way.

Almost everything one might say in criticism of the death rate method is true for the "Yom Kippur" method—though the latter is certainly less ghoulish. This is the American version of an approach first used in London in 1892. Llewlyn Smith figured the Jewish population as six times the number of Jewish children listed in a parliamentary report of school attendance. The American school system does not list the religion of its students. However, the number of Jewish children is ingeniously estimated by subtracting school attendance on Yom Kippur from average school attendance. The number is then multiplied by the ratio of school children to the total population, as shown for that area by the census. Again, various refinements are possible: one can take the ratio of school children to total population that prevails in the specific areas known to be Jewish, and so on. But of course, this method begs the question of whether the same proportion of Jewish children as of non-Jewish go to school, and by its very nature it can give no peculiarities of Jewish family size or age distribution.

Sometimes lists of Jewish names are used as an index to the size of the total Jewish population. For example, the Jewish Welfare Board collected at great expense a supposedly complete list of Jewish soldiers. One can then assume that the proportion of Jewish soldiers to the total Jewish population is the same as the proportion of all American soldiers to the total American population.

A rather different approach from all these is to collect a master list of all Jews in the community—gathered from lists of contributors to Jewish funds, of members of organizations,

supplemented in some cases by such sources as lists of kosher butchers, delicatessen shops, and in-going and out-going Jewish families kept by some real-estate firms. This master list may then serve as the basis for a house-to-house canvass which will determine the number in each household, age, and so on. Of course, all depends on the completeness of the original list, and particularly in large communities there is no good way of telling how complete the list is, short of a complete census.

Most of the ten studies in *Jewish Population Studies*, our main source for detailed knowledge of the Jewish population, are based on the use of the master list.

WE MAY illustrate this method at its most sophisticated level by describing a recent large-scale study of Newark by the Essex County Jewish Community Council. Previous estimates of the population of Newark had shown extraordinary variations. In 1918 it was estimated there were 55,000 Jews in Newark, and in 1922 and again in 1925 the Jewish population was estimated as between 65,000 and 75,000; but in 1937 the Yom Kippur method showed a drop to 52,000, in 1944 another drop to 42,000. Could the Jewish population of Newark have dropped almost 50 per cent in twenty years, or was this striking decline caused by the different methods that had been used to estimate the population?

The study began with a master list of approximately twenty thousand names. A sample of 2900 was then set up on the following basis: in those election districts which had the densest Jewish population, one in thirty households was selected, and the proportion selected rose until in the districts which had the fewest Jews every household was included. The master list was checked for accuracy against the names listed in the city directory, and it was discovered that six per cent of the Jewish families in the most populated districts, and sixty per cent in the least populated, were not covered in the list. More households were then added to the sample, and detailed population statistics for the estimated 56,800 Jews in Newark were built up on the basis of interviews with the augmented sample.

There are three limiting factors in the procedure followed, according to Philip Hauser, formerly of the Census Bureau: (1) the preliminary determination that Newark proper should have two-thirds of the sample, based on

previous estimates of the relative distribution of Jews in Newark and its suburbs; (2) the effect of the "not-at-homes" in the interviewing was not mathematically accounted for; and (3) the sample was chosen from the master list rather than from a complete canvass of all households in areas chosen at random from all those in the city. Nevertheless, this study represents the best that has as yet been done, and Newark is now the only city for which detailed data on the Jewish population is available by small areas for planning purposes.

WHAT then can we say about American Jewish population? It is clear everything we say must be tentative. We must put together the results of many studies, conducted from very different presuppositions: in some cases, a Jew is defined as a person whose death certificate shows he was buried by a Jewish undertaking firm, in others it is a person with a Jewish name, in others it is a person absent from school on Yom Kippur. Sometimes the Jew is a person who has contributed to a Jewish organization, or who, when interviewed, is willing to identify himself as Jewish. Counting Jews is not like counting Chinese, who are easily identifiable in a population.

With all these qualifications, the figures for twelve hundred communities in the 1948 *American Jewish Year Book* suggest that the total is much less than five million, and may not exceed four million. It is probably fair to say that these figures have been more systematically and carefully compiled than the 1937 series in the *American Jewish Year Book*. It seems clear that in many instances the 1937 estimates were exaggerated.

However, while we cannot be certain about just how many Jews there are in the country, we can be pretty sure about some of the characteristics of this population, whatever its size, largely on the basis of detailed studies of selected communities. We know something about its distribution as between rural and urban areas; the occupations in which it is concentrated; the proportion of foreign-born among it; and its distribution by age. And this type of information permits us to make a pretty sound guess as to the future growth or decline of American Jewish population. Let us examine each of these four indexes of the Jewish demographic future.

URBAN-RURAL DISTRIBUTION: Although there are Jews in every one of the forty-

eight states, and in a little more than one-third of the 3600 incorporated places with a population of more than 2500, probably more than half of all the Jews in the United States live in New York State. If we list the thirteen cities with more than forty thousand Jews,* we will discover that while they contain five-sevenths of the estimated Jewish population, they include only one-seventh of the total American population. The five cities in the United States with populations of one million or more—New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and Detroit—account for approximately one-eighth of the total population, but for about six-eighths of the Jewish population.

Average family size, the annual birth rate, the number of children borne by a woman in her lifetime—all these indexes related to population growth are far smaller for urban populations than for rural. So the predominantly urban way of life of the Jews in the United States suggests the prevalence of small rather than of large families among Jews.

Our figures do not however tell the whole story. In the seven states which account for almost nine-tenths of the total Jewish population—New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, and California—many of the small Jewish communities are in no sense rural but are rather suburban extensions of the large communities. It might be argued that the conditions of suburban life favor larger families, and fortunately the Newark survey supplies some evidence on this point. In the Jewish population of Essex county, the proportion of children under five is 11 per cent in the suburbs, 8 per cent in Newark as a whole, and only 5 per cent in ward three, the old center of Jewish population. However, this larger proportion

of young children in the suburbs may say nothing about the size of *completed* families—which will determine the populations of the future—since the suburban population contains a higher proportion of young couples: only 43 per cent have been married twenty years or more, as against 60 per cent in Newark. It also reflects the rise in birth rates following a war, and this increase, it has been suggested, may only fill in the gaps in population created by the war, and does not portend a radical change in ultimate family size: "A change in the rate at which people are having children in a given year can no longer be taken as an indication of a change in the number of children they will bear altogether in the course of their reproductive lives." (J. Hajnal, "The Analysis of Birth Statistics in the Light of the Recent International Recovery of the Birthrate," *Population Studies*, September 1947.)

IN FEBRUARY 1949, the New York City Board of Education released a study which indicated a rising birth rate and a shifting population, and which called for a vast school building program in New York City in the next six years: but on analysis, it is clear that the emergency cannot be explained by an increase in the number of Jewish children in New York City. It is caused by the migration of families with high child-adult ratios into New York City, chiefly from the South and from Puerto Rico, and by the migration of New Yorkers to the periphery of the city, to certain reclaimed areas, and to the suburbs. The new congregations on Long Island and in Westchester County suggest that a large portion of the migrants from Manhattan, the Bronx, and Brooklyn are Jews, but these are persons largely drawn from the top quarter

*CITIES WITH ESTIMATED JEWISH POPULATIONS OF 40,000 AND OVER
RANKED BY SIZE OF JEWISH POPULATION

CITY	ESTIMATED JEWISH POPULATION 1948	TOTAL POPULATION 1940 (ROUNDED)	PERCENTAGE OF JEWS
New York	2,000,000	7,500,000	28
Chicago	300,000	3,396,000	8.8
Philadelphia	245,000	1,931,000	12.7
Los Angeles	225,000	1,504,000	15
Boston	137,000	771,000	17
Detroit	90,000	1,623,000	5.5
Cleveland	80,000	878,000	9.1
Baltimore	75,000	859,000	8
Newark	56,800	430,000	13
Pittsburgh	54,000	671,600	8
San Francisco	50,000	634,000	8
St. Louis	44,000	816,000	5.4
Miami	40,000	172,000	24

of the income group, and we cannot expect large families from them.

There remain five hundred small Jewish communities located at a considerable distance from big towns. North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia, for example, are dotted with tiny communities of less than one hundred Jews each. In the course of their canvass of the Atlantic seaboard for funds and members, the national Jewish organizations are in touch with the smallest of these towns. But even if an equally diligent search revealed small settlements of Jews in other more remote sections of the country, their net effect on the total Jewish population, either now or in the future, would be negligible. In any case, it is most unlikely they are characterized by a high rate of increase. Residence in these small communities is apt to mean, for Jews, fewer available marriage partners, more intermarriage, and smaller families.

Thus, unlike the situation for the general population, in which a high rural birth rate offsets the decline in urban family size, the number of Jews in rural areas is an infinitesimal portion of the total Jewish population. They can hardly be counted upon to replenish the losses resulting from the decreasing family size of the Jews in the larger communities, even if the satellite suburban Jewish family does increase somewhat in size.

OCCUPATION: Students of population have established a close correlation between family size and occupational class. Partly because of higher age at marriage for professional persons, and partly because advancement in business makes heavy financial demands, the families of business and professional men are smaller than those of unskilled workers or farm laborers. While it is not easy to compare Jewish occupational distribution with that of the general population, because of the differences in definition and the time which has elapsed since the nearest census, for each of the cities for which we have detailed data there are similarities in the occupational distribution of Jews and striking differences with the general population. These differences appear in spite of the very different techniques used.

The most striking Jewish occupational characteristic is the concentration in retail trade, which includes 43 per cent of the Jews in Passaic and as much as 60 per cent in Pittsburgh, in comparison with a figure of 16.7 per cent for the country as a whole in 1940.

A second, less striking difference is the Jewish clustering in the professions. In 1940, the professions accounted for slightly less than seven per cent of Americans gainfully occupied. The percentages of gainfully occupied Jews in the professions were estimated as 7.7 in Cleveland in 1940, 7.4 in New York in 1935, 8.8 in Chicago in 1930, 9.5 in Pittsburgh in 1938, and approximately 12 per cent in Trenton, Passaic, Stamford, and New Orleans in the 1930's, and about 14 per cent in New London in 1938. Within the professions, Jews concentrate in medicine and in law, which together account for from one-third (in San Francisco) to two-thirds (in Boston) of all the Jews in professions.

Consistent with this predominance in the professions and in wholesale and retail trades is the large proportion of self-employed in the Jewish group—38 per cent—in comparison with about 19 per cent in the general population.

The proportion of gainfully employed Jews in the skilled occupations is nowhere near that of the total population. There are relatively few Jews in the manufacturing and mechanical industries: the proportion varies from 11 per cent in Dallas and Trenton to 27 per cent in Detroit. In the New York City study of families with young persons between the ages of 16 and 24 in 1935, only three per cent of the Jewish youths were children of unskilled workers, in comparison with 18 per cent in the non-Jewish families. Clerks and kindred workers, on the other hand, composed about 40 per cent of the gainfully occupied Jews in Pittsburgh, Detroit, and San Francisco, in the 30's, while in the general population in 1940, they accounted for about one-fifth of those gainfully employed.

Unfortunately, we have no data for Jews alone relating family size to the occupation of the head of the family. For the general urban native white population in 1940, however, we have figures for the number of children under five per thousand married women aged fifteen through forty-nine, classified according to the occupations of their husbands. For the occupational groups in which Jews are most frequently found—proprietors, managers, and officials; professional and semi-professional; and clerical, sales, and the like—the figures are 305, 365, and 353. These contrast with 645 for farm laborers, 588 for other laborers, and 477 for operatives, (factory workers, draftsmen, etc.)—occupation groups in which Jews are infrequently classified.

Dr. Kingsley Davis (*Journal of Legal and Political Sociology*, April 1944) has suggested on

the basis of the data in *Jewish Population Studies* that Jewish immigrants who came to America did not, like other immigrants, start as unskilled or semi-skilled laborers, but with trade. With income derived from this source, they educated their children for the professions. Success in trade thus furnished the basis for movement into still higher social strata. In common with all socially mobile persons, Jews are paying the price of low fertility.

PROPORTION OF FOREIGN BORN: Family size is related not only to occupation and residence in urban as opposed to rural areas, but also to foreign as against native birth.

In the cities for which we have details, a little more than one-third of the Jewish population is foreign-born. The small proportion of Jewish foreign-born in New Orleans—twenty per cent—is evidence that it has not been the destination of immigrants among the Jews, or among others, for that matter, for some decades. In contrast, Passaic and its silk mills have attracted Jews from among the more recent immigrants, and 40 per cent of its Jewish population was foreign-born in 1937.

Some evidence on the relation between family size and nativity of parents is presented by Dr. Nathan Goldberg in *The Jewish People: Past and Present*, Vol. II, 1948. Dr. Goldberg's chief contribution to the study of Jewish demography has been his wide use of the figures on "mother tongue"—the language spoken in the home in earliest childhood—which are gathered by the census. One and three-quarter million persons reported Yiddish as their mother tongue in 1940. These figures have not been made use of by students of Jewish demography, perhaps because they are considered to be badly reported, but Dr. Goldberg draws interesting testimony from them.

The census compares the birth rates and average number of children of Yiddish-speaking mothers born in Russia and Poland with those of American-born mothers. Dr. Goldberg shows from this material that the average immigrant Jewish mother under forty-five years of age had fewer children than the average American-born white mother and than the average non-Jewish foreign-born mother, and that while the older mothers in general had had more children than younger mothers, the decline by age-groups was greater among immigrant Jewish women than it was among American-born white women.

Similar testimony is given for five cities in *Jewish Population Studies* that native-born Jews have smaller families than the foreign-born:

MEDIAN NUMBER OF CHILDREN BY PARENTAGE FOR NATIVE AND FOREIGN-BORN JEWISH MOTHERS		
City	Foreign-Born	Native-Born
Buffalo	3.4	2.2
Minneapolis	1.5	0.3
New London	3.1	1.5
Passaic	2.1	1.5
Trenton	2.1	1.6

So from this source too we see little hope for an increase in Jewish population.

PROPORTION OF CHILDREN: The most direct evidence for use in predicting the future of the Jewish population in America is its present age composition. Birth rates may be deceptive; but if there is a high proportion of young people in the population, we have the best possible evidence for future growth. Now the age structure of the populations in the several cities studied reveals progressively smaller proportions of Jewish children in the younger age groups.

The story for Minneapolis, Pittsburgh, and Cincinnati is as follows:

PROPORTION OF THE TOTAL JEWISH POPULATION IN EACH AGE GROUP					
	Under 5	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24
Minneapolis	5.4	7.1	8.9	10.7	11.3
Pittsburgh	5.3	6.4	8.9	10	9.9
Cincinnati	3.8	6.1	7.3	8	9.7

The successively smaller proportions in each younger age group mean a smaller reservoir for replenishing the Jewish population in each succeeding decade.

The proportions of the total Jewish population under twenty years of age vary from as little as 22 per cent in San Francisco to as much as 34.9 in Detroit. In Boston, Buffalo, and Chicago, the proportions under twenty years of age were also approximately one-third. There is rather less difference in the cities studied in the proportion of the total Jewish population in the twenty-year span from 25 to 45. This accounts roughly for one-third of the total. Since this group, the present reproducing population, is as large as the group under twenty, it suggests that the American Jews of tomorrow will be about or almost as numerous as those of today. There is no broad base in the younger age groups to provide the reservoir for replenishing the present Jewish population in the United States as it grows older. This was also the conclusion L. Hersch came to when he examined the state of

Jewish population in Europe ("The Downward Trend of Jewish Population," *Commentary*, February 1949).

OUR examination of the data in four areas has left room for only one conclusion. But no demographer could make an unqualified prediction of the future level of population, particularly in the case of a group so subject to special developments as the Jews. Conceivably, Jewish population may decline more rapidly than we have suggested because of increases in birth control, intermarriage, conversion, and more intense urbanization. On the other hand, it is possible other factors will operate to reverse the trends that now indicate the decline of Jewish population. Perhaps the continuance of relatively full employment, the lowering of the age at marriage, and other factors that have led to the striking increase in the American population since the last census may operate to as good effect on the Jews; we have no way of knowing whether this is happening.

Perhaps completely new factors may affect Jewish population growth: for example, if the economic state of the Jews continues as favorable as it has been, and is accompanied by decentralization and suburban residence, the fall in the birth rate may be reversed: suburbanization may be more favorable to the birth rate than urbanization. And then there are such intangible cultural factors as the desire to make up for the losses of the recent war; the stimulus provided by the establishment of the Jewish state; the recent development of a heightened

self-consciousness among American Jews, and perhaps of a greater sense of security in America; all of which might help to increase the number of Jewish births.

In this uncertain and somewhat unsatisfactory state we must leave the discussion of American Jewish population. We must assume that the actual canvass of the Jews by the Census Bureau is out of the question politically—for, whatever its value for Jewish scholars or even the work of Jewish organizations, these same organizations would probably fight fiercely to scotch any effort to include a question on religion in the census, and no one else has any particular interest in including such a question. So it does not seem likely that we will be able to be more definite about this question for some time to come.

However, the present situation is not without possibility of some improvement. The wasteful and costly separate, independent, and non-comparable surveys of towns here and there could be replaced by one survey properly planned, and organized so as to ensure the comparability of results. A number of Jewish organizations have recently set up a Bureau of Jewish Demography to pool all the resources available for Jewish demographic investigations. Perhaps this organization may be able to establish such a voluntary, regular, survey—a "census" would be far beyond the powers of any private group. If it can, it would substantially help Jewish communal planning, and permit a level of sociological self-understanding that is at present unattainable for American Jews.